

Paul leads Texas congressmen in opposing Clinton anti-property rights action *Says president acted improperly by using Executive Order, rather than with congressional approval*
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WASHINGTON, DC - Leading a team of eight Texas congressmen, US Representative Ron Paul (R-Surfside, Texas) this week sent a letter to President Clinton urging him to withdraw his Executive Order implementing the American Heritage Rivers Initiative (AHRI). The letter was co-signed by US Representatives Dick Armey of Irving, Bill Archer of Houston, Henry Bonilla of San Antonio, Sam Johnson of Dallas, Lamar Smith of San Antonio, Pete Sessions of Dallas and Kay Granger of Fort Worth.

In the letter, Paul wrote that each of these members have expressed their own and their constituents concerns about the impact of the AHRI, including "whether the executive branch has the authority to create such a program, whether the initiative was brought forth in a procedurally correct manner, and whether the program is an unwarranted encroachment upon state water law."

The AHRI is an ambiguous policy which claims to coordinate environmental protection, but is unclear regarding the costs, the benefits and even the basis by which rivers are or are not to be placed on the list. Further, the initiative creates mountainous new bureaucracies within the existing agencies.

"On September 11, 1997, you signed an Executive Order to various Federal agencies to implement the American Heritage Rivers Initiative ... this, despite the fact that your proposal triggered an avalanche of concern over what precisely an American Heritage River designation would entail, as well as the associated impacts to private property rights," Paul wrote in the letter on behalf of himself and the other congressmen. Further, the letter asks that the President "withdraw the American Heritage Rivers Initiative."

Paul said he is committed to fighting the AHRI because it is a basic infringement on the rights of individuals and is a clear violation of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution.

"The federal government has absolutely no authority to step in and regulate the rivers and the lands through which the rivers flow. The president is acting far outside the bounds of the Constitution and this initiative must be stopped," said Representative Paul. "The Constitution clearly does not give the President this authority, nor does Congress have this authority. The right to owning property without interference is the most basic to all other rights. If there is to be regulation and 'protection' of rivers, or land, for that matter, it is an issue the Constitution dictates must be reserved solely to the states."

In the letter to the President, Paul and his colleagues requested that they receive written assurances that, at the very least, "Texas will not be made a part of any American Heritage River designation."